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ABSTRACT

This book examines the impact of socioeconomic and school environments on youth. It was inspired by the author's work investigating a suicide pact involving four teenagers in Bergenfield, New Jersey in 1987. Through that investigation and afterwards, the author befriended suburban adolescents considered to be outcasts by their families, educators, peers, and themselves. This book discusses those encounters. It looks beyond the typical adult opinion of alternative adolescents and suggests that American youth are, for the most part, misunderstood. It offers the view that many of the problems experienced and perpetrated by adolescents, such as suicide and violence, can be explained by this generational misunderstanding. The underlying theme of this book is a hopeful one. It suggests that adults should work to understand today's youth in its diversity and to help these individuals become empowered. (MKA)

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